

In the Claims:

Please cancel Claims 2, 5 and 20. Please replace pending Claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 17 and 19 with the following replacement Claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 17 and 19, respectively.

1. (Amended) A nonwoven fabric laminate, comprising:

a first nonwoven layer;

a second nonwoven layer; and

A1 a meltblown web positioned between the first nonwoven layer and the second nonwoven layer, the meltblown web comprising at least one layer of fine meltblown fibers adjacent at least one layer of coarse meltblown fibers, and having a gradient fiber size structure wherein adjacent layers of the meltblown web have a mean diameter difference of at least 4.0 microns.

3. (Amended) The nonwoven fabric laminate of claim 1, wherein the fine meltblown fibers have an average diameter less than about 5.0 microns.

A2 4. (Amended) The nonwoven fabric laminate of claim 1, wherein the fine meltblown fibers have an average diameter of 0.1 micron to about 4.0 microns.

6. (Amended) The nonwoven fabric laminate of claim 1, wherein the coarse meltblown fibers have an average diameter at least about 5.0 microns.

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7. (Amended) The nonwoven fabric laminate of claim 1, wherein the coarse meltblown fibers have an average diameter of about 6.0 microns to about 15 microns.

8. (Amended) The nonwoven fabric laminate of claim 1, wherein the at least one layer of fine meltblown fibers is bonded to the at least one layer of coarse meltblown fibers.

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17. (Amended) A nonwoven fabric laminate, comprising:
a first spunbond layer;
a meltblown web having a first side bonded to a first side of the first spunbond layer, the meltblown web comprising at least one layer of coarse meltblown fibers having a first mean fiber diameter adjacent at least one layer of fine meltblown fibers having a second mean fiber diameter wherein a difference between the first mean fiber diameter and the second mean fiber diameter is at least 4.0 microns; and

*As
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a second spunbond layer having a first side bonded to a second side of the meltblown web.

19. (Amended) A nonwoven fabric laminate, comprising:

As

a meltblown web having at least one layer of coarse meltblown fibers adjacent at least one layer of fine meltblown fibers, the coarse meltblown fibers having an average diameter of at least about 5 microns and the fine meltblown fibers having an average diameter of less than about 5 microns,

the at least one layer of coarse meltblown fibers and the at least one layer of fine meltblown fibers provide a gradient fiber size structure, wherein the at least one layer of coarse meltblown fibers has a mean fiber diameter at least 4.0 microns greater than a mean fiber diameter of the at least one layer of fine meltblown fibers.

REMARKS

Applicants' undersigned attorney thanks the Examiner for her comments. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this patent application, particularly in view of the above Amendment and the following remarks.